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## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

ROBERT LEON BUCKNER,

Plaintiff, pro se

V.

DR. ANTHONY BUSSANICH, M.D. and

DONALD ROMINE, WARDEN,

Defendants

FILED
HARRISBURG, PA
FEB 2001

MARY E. DANDREA, CLERK

J. Caldwell

CIVIL CASE No. 1:CV-00-1594 (Caldwell, J.)

# REPLY BRIEF OF PLAINTIFF, OPPOSING DEFENDANT'S MOTION TO DISMISS

ROBERT LEON BUCKNER,

Plaintiff, pro se

Federal Prison Camp Lewisburg P.O. Box 2000 - Unit K01-009L Lewisburg, Pennsylvania 17837

Dated: February 1, 2001.

#### TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Authorities	ii
Case History	
Question Presented	4
Argument	4 THRU 11
Conclusion	12
Certificate Of Service	13
Appendix	14

#### TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Cases:	
Booth v. Churner,	
202 F.3d 289 (3rd Cir. 2000), cert. granted,	
U.S, 121 S.Ct. 377, (October 30,	
2000)(Docket No. 99-1964)	5, 6
Cruz v. Beto,	
405 U.S. 319 (1972)	, 10
Haines v. Kerner,	
404 U.S. 519 (1972) 5	, 10
Muscato v. Federal Bureau of Prisons,	
98 F.3d 757 (3rd Cir. 1996)	}
Nyhuis v. Reno,	
204 F.3d 65 (3rd Cir. 2000)5	, 7
Whitley v. Hunt,	•
158 F.3d 882 (5th Cir. 1998) 7	i
Federal Statutes:	
42 U.S.C. §1983 8	
42 U.S.C. §1997e(a) 6	. 7
	, .
Miscellaneous:	•
Prison Litigation Reform Act ("PLRA") 6	. 10
Wohaton's Nov. Int'l Distinguy 150 (2nd od 1001)	

<del>Sase 1:88-sv-84:534-WWC - Bocument 18 - Filed 82/87/2881 - Page 4-of 2</del>6

### IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

ROBERT LEON BUCKNER,

Plaintiff, pro se

CIVIL No. 1:CV-00-1594 (Caldwell, J.)

DR. BUSSANICH, et al.,

Defendants

PLAINTIFF'S OPPOSITION TO DEFENDANT'S
MOTION TO DISMISS, OR, IN THE ALTERNATIVE,
PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGEMENT AND,
ISSUANCE OF EMERGENCY PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION, AND,
APPOINTMENT OF COUNSEL AND EXPERT MEDICAL WITNESS

comes now, Robert Leon Buckner, Plaintiff, proceeding pro se in this action, hereby opposes the Defendant's motion to dismiss, and moves this Honorable Court to DENY such motion; to appoint counsel to represent Plaintiff; to appoint an expert medical witness; to GRANT summary judgement in favor of Plaintiff; and to make issue an emergency preliminary injunction ordering the Defendants to continue Plaintiff's medicinal regimen of Clonazepam 2mg. and Meclazine Hydrochloride 25 mg., three times a day. In support thereof, your Plaintiff states the following:

#### CASE HISTORY

Your Plaintiff, Robert Buckner, an Honorably Discharged and decorated Vietnam Veteran, sustained severe head injuries from a mine blast in the early 1970's. As a result, he suffers from, <u>interalia</u>, 8th cranial nerve damage, severe Meniere's disease with the accompanying tinnitus, vertigo, nausea and headaches, among other symptoms, which are debilitating. He has gone through numerous trials of different medications and combinations thereof since his return to the States. These tests and trials by a number of Physicians

and other specialists in fields such as Neurology; Ear, Nose and Throat; Psychology and Psychiatry. These were carried out in several different hospitals and other offices.

As a result of these trials, the specialists determined that the best course of action was a combination of the drugs, Diazepam and Meclazine Hydrochloride. After many years of this treatment, the drug, "Clonazepam" was placed on the market. The physicians, seeing an identical therapeutic effect in cases such as Plaintiff's, yet a milder CNS "sedative" effect than most benzodiazepines. His regimen was, after a short trial with Clonazepam, then changed to Clonazepam 2 mg. and Meclizine Hydrochloride 25 mg., taken in combination, three times a day. This combination has worked to a degree that Plaintiff was able to live a prosperous, healthy, constructive life, free of the debilitating symptoms of his Meniere's disease.

In July of 1998, Plaintiff was taken into custody by Maryland State Authorities and detained at the Baltimore City Jail for, interalia, a Grand Jury indictment for a non-violent federal offense that occurred a number of years prior. He was subsequently transferred to the Maryland Penitentiary; Anne Arundel County Jail; Maryland Super-Maximum Security Prison; and back to the Maryland Penitentiary. During this entire period, the medical staff at the various locations above, being acquainted with Buckner's medical conditions from previous incarcerations, continued his regimen of medications, which included the combination of Clonazepam and Meclizine. It was not until Plaintiff's arrival at Lewisburg that he began to have much difficulty with maintaining his proper medicinal regimen with the medical staff (Dr. Bussanich) at Lewisburg.

When Dr. Bussanich indicated that he was going to decrease Plaintiff's Clonazepam, and eventually discontinue it, Plaintiff tried in vain to explain the importance of the drug combination and what happens without it. Dr. Bussanich finally informed the Plaintiff that, if he had any documentation from the outside, he would continue the medication.

Despite the medical records subsequently received by Dr. Bussanich (See Exhibit A), he continued to decrease the medication.

Plaintiff attempted to resolve this problem by filing an administrative remedy ("BP-8"), which was denied. He then appealed to the Warden ("BP-9"), and was again denied. At that point, the symptoms suffered by Plaintiff were to a point that he took action in an effort to obtain an emergency preliminary injunction which would order the Defendants to continue the Clonazepam and Meclizine combination. This instant action was a result of that filing.

This action, which was filed on September 8, 2000, was dismissed without prejudice on September 28, 2000, for failure to exhaust administrative remedies. Plaintiff immediately attempted to obtain an appeal form ("BP-10") to appeal the Warden's denial. He was informed that the time had expired for an appeal and, therefore, a BP-10 was not available to him.

He subsequently asked for a BP-8 in an attempt to start the action over again. Again, Buckner was informed that a BP-8 was not available to him for such a complaint because it was "Res Judicata" by the previous filing. He then filed a Motion to vacate the court's order and reopen the case. On November 8, 2000, this case was reopened.

A motion to dismiss was purportedly filed on January 12, 2001, (Plaintiff never received), and a brief in support thereof was filed on January 29, 2001. (although without Certificate of service)

On January 25, 2001, Defendants filed a motion for leave to file a brief in excess of fifteen pages. On January 27, 2001, your Plaintiff filed a response to that motion offering his concurrence to any excess pages needed to respond to his complaint.

Plaintiff Buckner now responds to Defendant's motion to dismiss his claim for failure to exhaust remedies.  $\frac{1.}{}$ 

#### QUESTION PRESENTED

"Can Buckner maintain a cause of action after he has perhaps inadvertently defaulted on his administrative remedies." (See order dated November 8, 2000, at 2.)

#### **ARGUMENT**

Plaintiff concurs in part with Defendant's construction of law as far as evaluating a motion to dismiss a complaint. Though he would add that Plaintiff, being a pro se litigant, unlearned in law, as well as a prisoner, should have his complaint and further filings in this case construed liberally and "not to stringent standards as those submitted by a lawyer." Cruz v. Beto, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). And, that his complaint "should not be dismissed for failure to state a claim unless it appear[s] beyond doubt that the inmate could prove no set of facts in support of his claim which would entitle him to relief," and if so "he [is] entitled to an

<sup>1./</sup>It should be noted that the Defendants have stated that they filed a motion to dismiss on January 12, 2001. Plaintiff has not, as of yet, been supplied a copy of that motion. (see Plaintiff's response dated 1/27/01, at #2.)
Furthermore, although Defendants have not included a certificate of service with brief in support of motion to dismiss, nonetheless Buckner acknowledges receipt of the brief on January 31, 2001.

opportunity to offer proof." Haines v. Kerner, 404 U.S. 519 (1972).

In this case, Plaintiff has stated a claim and is entitled to relief, and continues to suffer from the acts and omissions of the Defendants to this day. Therefore, the Defendant's motion to dismiss should be denied, summary judgement should be entered in favor of Buckner, and an emergency preliminary injunction should issue. 2./

Defendants have stated that "Buckner willfully, not "inadvertently," bypassed the administration process." (Def. Brief of Mot. to Dismiss, page 8.); That he "INTENTIONALLY FAILED TO EXHAUST HIS ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES...." (Id. at page 5).

In support of his position, or opposition, to that claim of Defendants, Plaintiff submits an affidavit to brace his stand in that he did not "willfully" or "INTENTIONALLY" fail to exhaust his administrative remedies. That, in fact, it was the actions or inactions of the Defendants, set forth in this claim, that had such an effect on Plaintiff highly contributing to any actions or omissions by the Plaintiff in the following of his efforts to obtain relief. (See Exhibit B, Affidavit of Plaintiff Buckner).

The reasoning for this position taken by Buckner will be more fully outlined in detail hereafter in this reply to Defendant's motion to dismiss.

Defendants, in their motion to dismiss, cite Nyhuis v. Reno, 204 F.3d 65, 78 (3rd Cir. 2000); and Booth v. Churner, 206 F.3d 289

Plaintiff Buckner has moved this court for an emergency injunction that would order defendants to administer the medication as it was upon his arrival at Lewisburg. He has also moved for appointment of counsel and appointment of an expert witness in this case.

(3rd Cir. 2000), cert. granted, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, U.S. \_\_\_\_\_, 121 S.Ct. 377, (October 30, 2000)(Docket No. 99-1964), in that "no action shall be brought in federal court until such administrative remedies as are available have been exhausted." Id. (emphasis added) 3./

In fact, Circuit Judge Noonan, concurring and dissenting in **Booth**, stated that assaults and batteries by prison officials "are far removed from what that sponsors said was on their minds" when passing the PLRA. (See, <u>Booth</u>, dissent at 302). "Therefore, it concludes, §1997e(a) was not intended to encompass excessive force claims." <u>Id</u>. at 298, foot note 9.

This instant action can be deemed an "assault" on Buckner where Dr. Bussanich, misusing his authority by his denial of the appropriate medical treatment of Plaintiff for severe Meniere's disease, knowingly causing Plaintiff to sustain serious bodily injuries, as well as experiencing debilitating physical as well as psychological effects causing permanent damage to Plaintiff.

The Defendant Romine, Warden, had the authority to intervene by way of Plaintiff's remedy request (BP-9). Yet, he took a less efficacious route by handing the remedy over to medical staff to answer. Thus, hoping it would be safely swept under the rug and, by this action, causing manifest injustice.

There should be no substantive change in the case law of <u>Booth</u> as would effect Plaintiff's case. The only question presented and excepted for review by the Supreme Court is: "Does 42 USC §1997e(a), which, as amended by the [PIRA], provides that prisoner must exhaust "such administrative remedies as are available" before bringing federal action, require seeking only monetary damages to exhaust..[].if..[]..not available under...process?" Since Buckner is also seeking emergency injunctive relief; the very reason for bringing this action to court so as to attempt to seek <u>emergency</u> relief by way of a preliminary injunction to immediately restart his medication regimen.

Even after being made well aware of these adverse effects caused by their actions and omissions, Defendants continue to deny Buckner the medication that would, and has been proven to, alleviate these symptoms and relieve Plaintiff from any further physical, bodily harm.

To reiterate to some extent what was briefly brought forth in Plaintiffs Motion to Reconsider Dismissal is the "availability" of a remedy to Buckner:

In <u>Nyhuis</u>, the third circuit "Invok[ed] Webster's definition of the word 'available' as it applies to a remedy" -- "a remedy is 'available' when it can be availed 'for accomplishment of a purpose' or 'is accessible or may be obtained'" -- the court held that if prisoner sought a remedy that he could not obtain in accessible administrative procedures, pursuant to §1997e(a), he need not avail himself to those futile procedures before bringing an action in federal court." Nyhuis, supra., at 72, citing Whitley v. Hunt, 158 F.3d 882 (5th Cir. 1998), at 887, (quoting, WEBSTER'S NEW INT'L DICTIONARY 150 (3rd ed. 1981)). (emphasis in bold added).

Buckner explains, in his motion to reconsider dismissal and reopen case, that he attempted to "obtain" remedy forms from the Lewisburg Staff, who have sole control over the issuance of such forms, immediately after receipt of this court's order dismissing without prejudice. He was asked to explain the nature of his request for forms and, after being informed that the period to file such appeal of the Warden's denial, and that he could not start a new informal remedy form ("BP-8") because the issue had already been considered at that level therefore res judicata. Hence, he was denied those forms; thus, remedy was not "available" to him.

Prisons, 98 F.3d 757 (3rd Cir. 1996). More specifically, "that a prisoner's procedural default of his administrative remedies bars judicial review of [a] <u>habeas petition</u> unless he can show cause for the default and prejudice attributable thereto."

Muscato, at 760. (emphasis added).

In that case, Phillip B. Muscato was an inmate at FPC Allenwood petitioning <u>for habeas corpus</u> relief: challenging constitutionality of a disciplinary hearing and the subsequent forfeiture of goodtime credits. <u>Id.</u> at 757-59

However, in the instant case at bar, Buckner was denied his medication that, if not taken, causes him severe pain, vertigo, blindness, nausea, as well as other symptoms which, as a consequence of lack of that medication, causes him to sustain physical bodily injuries, and continue to do so to this day. Buckner's action was brought under, inter alia, a civil action; 42 USC §1983. 4./

Other side effects caused by the denial of Plaintiff's proper medication include aggressive anti-social behavior, "flashbacks" (PTSD), anxiety, and other physical, as well as pyschological effects such as the feeling of "betrayal" by the government. (See Response to Informal Resolution, Governments motion to dismiss, Exhibit 1, at page 0015). Thus, because of this "impairment" caused by the decrease of medications, Buckner should not be held accountable for such errors or mistakes while in such frame of mind.

Plaintiff's initial action was brought under not only "deliberate indifference" standards, but also, as an alternative, an action of medical malpractice, medical negligence, and tort. (See face of complaint)

The "cause" therefore lies in the actions (or omissions) by staff (Defendants) themselves, of which this complaint is based upon. The denial of medication is the direct cause of Plaintiff's frame of mind and inability to think totally rational during the periods of filings with Bureau of Prisons, and this court.

The "prejudice" would fall on the fact that Plaintiff would have absolutely no remedy, whether through informal, formal remedies, or this court, to cure his denial of medication and, as a result of that, would be subject to continued pain, suffering and bodliy injury which would be tantamount to "assault and battery" by the Defendants. Buckner will experience his pain and suffering day by day until freed from prison, or relieved by action of this court.

Under these circumstances, it certainly could not be held that Plaintiff, with only slight rational thought process intact as a result of lack of medication, could have "intentionally" failed to exhaust his administrative remedies.

It is stated by the Defendants that, "[b]ecause the record is clear that Buckner never attempted to exhaust the **second** and **third** levels of the administrative process, he cannot show cause for default." (See, mot. to dismiss brief, at page 18.)(emphasis added)

"prejudice," he nonetheless would advise the court that he indeed did complete the first and second levels in the formal manner. The first level is a "BP-8" which is also known as an "informal remedy." The second level is a "BP-9" which is the appeal to the Warden. The next levels are "BP-10" and "BP-11," the Regional Director of BOP, and the General Counsel, respectively. Although letters were later sent to both by Plaintiff (after the denial of

"BP-10" and "BP-8" to appeal Warden or restart request for remedy, and filing of motion to reconsider dismissal), of which he has received no response to as of yet.

Defendants argue that Plaintiff Buckner "was apprised of the Bureau of Prisons' Administrative Remedy Procedures for Inmates on April 5, 2000 -- within one day of his arrival at USP Lewisburg -- and again on April 26, 2000. (Exh. 1, at 7, 9.) He was therefore fully aware of the policy." (See, Def. mot. to Dismiss, at page 13-14)(emphasis added).

They rely on their exhibits #7 and #9 which are orientation "check lists" and are merely initialed by staff to affirm the fact that new arrivals are made aware that an administrative remedy program "exists," among other resources such as law library, recreational programs, etc. There is no in-depth explanation given by staff as to the particulars of such a remedy program. This is likely because staff do not want to create an individual who would file frivolous remedies, time after time, as a "recreation" and use as an avenue to "kill time." Plaintiff understands the wasted time and resources that could be diverted from more important issues because of inmates such as this. (i.e., denial of medication or other medical treatment.) Unfortunately, Bureau of Prisons has no system in place to deter filings of a frivolous nature, such as PLRA.

Again, Plaintiff would ask this Court to review his complaint and subsequent filings under a standard of liberal construction, as ruled in <u>Cruz v. Beto</u>, <u>supra</u>. and <u>Haines v. Kerner</u>, <u>supra</u>. and keep in mind the limited research materials of which are made

available to Plaintiff in this prison setting. 5./ That, in and of itself, should persuade this Court to appoint counsel at this junction, 6./ yet, it should not interfere with this Court's decision to issue an emergency, preliminary injunction to enjoin the Defendants not to further deny Plaintiff his medications, as stated herein; to wit, Clonazepam 2 mg. and Meclizine 25 mg. three times a day.

Appointment of counsel would not only be in the interest of the dispensation of fundamental fairness, but would also aid this court in the exploration of this issue of law not previously before this court.

Although the Court was rather clear, in its order reopening the case, that we're "to explore whether a prisoner can maintain a cause of action after he has perhaps inadvertently defaulted on his administrative remedies." (Order dated November 8, 2000, at 2.) (emphasis added); that this court had already determined the "default" was "inadvertently" made by Buckner. Id. Nevertheless, Plaintiff has attempted to reply with a substantive response herein to show "cause," "prejudice," and the fact that his failure to exhaust was not "willful" or "intentional."

Counsel, however, would be of great aid to this court, as well as Buckner, given his limited resources, and question of law at bar.

The "law library" at Federal Prison Camp, Lewisburg (LEC), does not contain a full line of resources such as the Defendants are privy to. The only reporters available are volume 604 F.2d, up to most recent F.3d's. LEC inmates must fill out a request (allowing only 5 cases at a time) and include full name and page of reporter to receive a copy of F.Supp. or U.S. Reporter.

Only 1 request can be submitted; you must wait to recieve 1st request before making a subsequent request. It would take literally months and months to fully and properly research in order to adequately answer a comprehensive brief such as that submitted my Defendants.

Because this case presents a question of law not previously before this court, Defendants filed a comprehensive brief. Plaintiff should have the same opportunity through counsel.

#### CONCLUSION

WHEREFORE, your Plaintiff, Robert Leon Buckner, moves this honorable Court for the following:

- 1.) DENY the Defendants' Motion to Dismiss;
- 2.) GRANT Plaintiff's Motion For Preliminary Injunctive Relief, ordering restart of his previous medications;
- 3.) GRANT Plaintiff's Motion for appointment of counsel;
- 4.) GRANT summary judgement if favor of Plaintiff;
- 5.) DENY summary judgement for Defendants;
- 6.) DENY Defendants' request "of certification that any appeal would be frivolous, lacking in probable cause, and not taken in good faith.";
- 7.) GRANT a hearing on the merits it this case;
- 8.) GRANT any other and further relief of which this Court deems just and proper.

DATE: February 1, 2001.

Respectfully submitted

Robert Leon Buckner,

Plaintiff, pro se

Federal Prison Camp Lewisburg P.O. Box 2000 - Unit KO1-009L Lewisburg, Pennsylvania 17837

## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

ROBERT LEON BUCKNER,

Plaintiff, pro se

 $\mathbf{v}$ .

DR. ANTHONY BUSSANICH, et al.,
Defendants

CIVIL CASE No.:

1:CV-00-1594

(Caldwell, J.)

IN RE: REPLY TO DEFENDANTS'
MOTION TO DISMISS

#### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that on this 1st day of January, 2001, a copy of the attached Reply to Defendants' Motion To Dismiss was mailed, postage prepaid, to: Mr. Matthew E. Haggerty, Esq., Assistant United States Attorney, 316 Federal Building, 240 West Third Street, Williamsport, Pennsylvania 17703, by placing same in a sealed envelope, addressed to the above, with affixed first-class postage, and placing same in the inmate legal-mail box at FPC-LEC, Lewisburg.

Robert Leon Buckner,

Plaintiff, pro se

Federal Prison Camp Lewisburg P.O. Box 2000 - Unit KO1-009L Lewisburg, Pennsylvania 17837

## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

CIVIL CASE No. 1:CV-00-1594 (Caldwell, J.)

BUCKNER

v.

BUSSANICH, et al.

# APPENDIX

TO THE PLAINTIFF'S OPPOSITION TO DEFENDANT'S MOTION TO DISMISS, ETC.

OBERT LEON BUCKNER BOP REG. No. 33001-037 FEDERAL PRISON CAMP LEWISBURG P.O. BOX 2000 - UNIT K01-009L LEWISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17837-2000

September 14, 2000

O'Mahoney, M.D. pitaX Office Maryland 21201

RE: REQUEST FOR MEDICAL RECORDS

Dear Dr. O'Mahoney;

Would you please be so kind as to mail me a copy of all medical that you have pertaining to me. My last visit to you was in early July, 1998, where I was treated for a gunshot wound to the right thigh and for Meneire's Disease and PTSD.

You also have a copy of Veterans Hospital records and a copy of my Form DD-214 which I need a copy of.

Your anticipated assistance is deeply appreciated.

With my very best regards, I remain

Sincerely yours

Robert Leon Buckner

IDENTIFYING INFORMATION

Robert Leon Buckner

DOB: 12/20/56 ~

SSN: 215-52-2753

LAST VISIT: Between 7/4 - 7/11/1998

LAST ADDRESS: 415 South Lehigh St. Balto. Md.

cc: File

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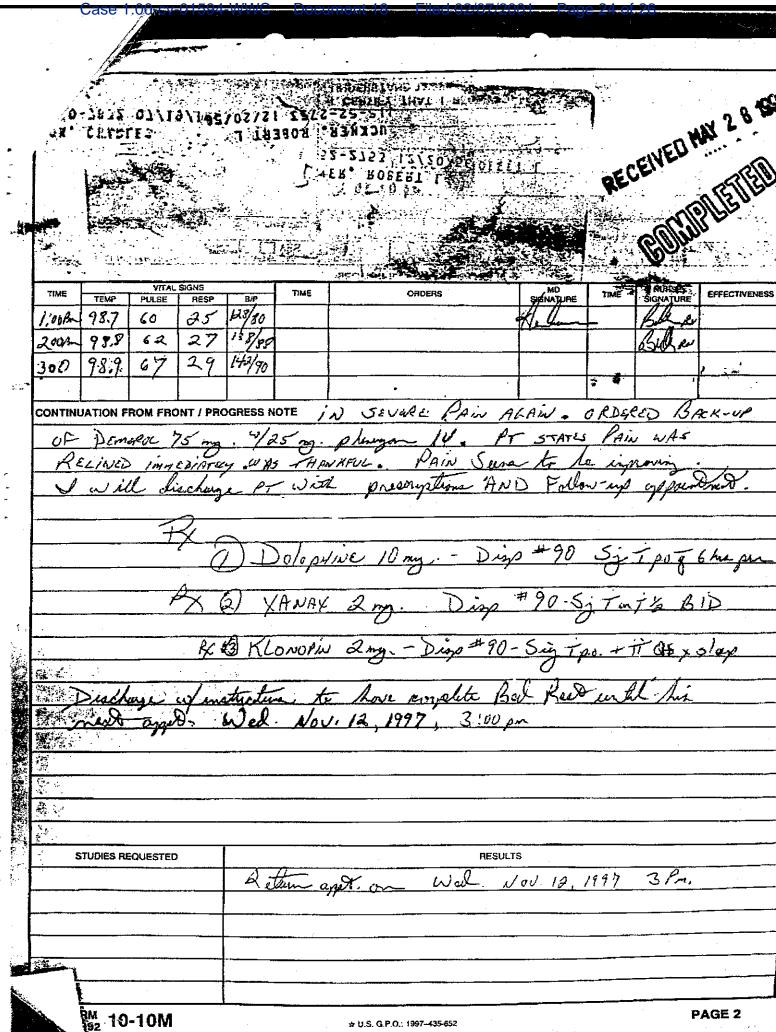
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### IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN RE:

PLAINTIFF'S AFFIDAVIT
IN SUPPORT OF OPPOSITION
TO DEFENDANT'S MOTION TO

DISMISS COMPLAINT,

OR, IN THE ALTERNATIVE, PLAINTIFF'S MOTION FOR SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

BUSSANICH, et al.

BUCKNER

v.

Civil Case No. 1:CV-00-1594 (Caldwell, J.)

#### AFFIDAVIT OF PLAINTIFF

I, Robert Leon Buckner, being in sound mind and body, and having personal knowledge to the facts set forth below, state that the following facts are a true and correct account.

After arriving at FPC Lewisburg on April 4, 2000, I informed Dr. Bussanich, as well as other Nurses and Physician's Assistants, that I was on a regimen of medication which among other medications included Clonazepam 2 mg. taken three times daily for a severe case of 8th cranial nerve damage and Meniere's disease; that I have been on this regimen for over twenty years.

My medications followed me from the Maryland Penitetiary on 4/4/2000. Dr. Bussanich allowed the dispensing of this Clonazepam and, when the Maryland Pen prescription ran out, he refilled the order numerous times. At a point in time after my arrival at FPC Lewisburg, Dr, Bussanich informed me that he was going to wean me off of the Clonazepam. Despite my objections, and even after he received a number of medical documents from the outside that was reflective of my need for this medication, he nevertheless continued the tapering of my Clonazepam.

I then filed an administrative remedy ("BP-8") in an attempt to stop this reduction of meds. My BP-8 was denied and I appealed this to the Warden ("BP-9") and it was denied. At that point, the repercussions of the denial of this drug had such a side effect that I filed the instant action in an effort to obtain an emergency injunction. I never intentionally failed to exhaust remedies.

UNDER THE PENALTIES OF PERJURY, I HEREBY DECLARE THAT THE ABOVE IS

TRUE AND CORRECT.

DATE: February 1, 2001.

Robert Leon Buckner

EXH B

ROBERT LEON BUCKNER
BOP REG. No. 33001-037
FEDERAL PRISON CAMP LEWISBURG
P.O. BOX 2000 - UNIT K01-009L
LEWISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA
17837 - 2000

February 1, 2001

Office of The Clerk United States District Court Middle District of Pennsylvania United States Courthouse 228 Walnut Street P.O. Box 983 Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17108

RE: Buckner v. Bussanich, et al.
Case No. 1:CV-00-1594 (Caldwell, J.)

Dear Honorable Clerk:

Enclosed, please find a copy of the Plaintiff's Reply Brief Opposing Defendant's Motion To Dismiss for filing in this case.

A copy has also been mailed to Mr. Matthew Haggerty, Assistant United States Attorney, representing the Defendants.

In addition, please note that there is a pending Motion for Appointment of Counsel which was filed with my recent concurrence to Defendants' Motion to Exceed Brief Limit of Fifteen Pages.

With my very best regards, I remain

Respectfully yours,

Robert Leon Buckner

cc: Matthew Haggerty (w/enclosure)
 file